



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

# Success !

## *Alligator Gar*

In the mid-1900s, alligator gar in excess of 300 pounds and exceeding 10 feet in length were commonplace in the Mississippi River Delta and along the Gulf Coast. Today, mature fish in excess of 150 pounds can't be found. For years, these fish were hated and feared – because of their size, their power and a ferocious appearance. In the 1930s, an effort began to eradicate the alligator gar from waters in the South, under the mistaken impression that they were a danger to people as well as to other fish. Those early efforts, along with habitat alteration, severely threatened the alligator gar population throughout the South, and the species remains threatened. Today, however, the threat is one resulting from the species' popularity as both a sport and food fish. In 1998, the Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency began working with the Private John Allen National Fish Hatchery to develop spawning techniques for alligator gar to support a restoration effort of Wolf River in southwest Tennessee. Brood fish were obtained from the Mississippi River and were spawned for the first time in 1999. More than 187,000 eggs were taken and more than 1,000 14 to 16-inch alligator gar resulted, for stocking in the Wolf River. Learning of the success at Private John Allen, several southern states with the Mississippi River drainage have identified restoration needs for this important species.